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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Eternal Lord God, we pause today to thank You for all of Your blessings. Thank You for the wonder of Your creation, for the beauty of the Earth, for the order You did bring out of chaos, for life itself.

Thank You for this legislative body and for the opportunity to make a substantive difference in the lives of American citizens and the people of our world.

Lord, be near to our lawmakers today. May they set their hearts on new and creative paths of service. Remind them that no true peace is possible without You. Let them remember that they are responsible for lifting others. Heighten their sensitivities and broaden their concerns, until duty becomes a life and not an event. Give them clear heads and trusting hearts. We pray in the Redeemer's Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK L. PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 10, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK L. PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 60 minutes. Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each during that period of time, with the times equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the second half.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the housing bill, and around 11 or maybe shortly thereafter, we will proceed to a series of three votes on the remaining amendments and passage of the bill.

Upon disposition of the housing bill, the Senate will proceed to S. 2739, the energy lands bill. There are four Coburn amendments in order to the bill, and the proponents and opponents

have up to 2 hours to debate the amendments prior to votes on the amendments and passage of the bill, as amended, if amended.

When the Senate completes the Energy bill, we will turn to executive session to consider the nominations of four district court judges and a circuit court judge. There will be up to 4 hours for debate prior to votes on confirmation of the nominations.

PRESIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS

Mr. REID. I would say two things, Mr. President. First of all, the distinguished Republican leader and I had a meeting with the President yesterday. I was happy to hear—I had heard he had issued a veto threat against this bill, and he said that is not the case, and that is good. I don't expect the President to like everything in our bill, but I think this is the beginning of the process. This bill will go to the House, and with the House and the White House, we can come up with a piece of legislation fairly quickly. So I was very satisfied with the housing discussion with the President yesterday.

CONFIRMATION OF JUDGES

Mr. REID. Finally, on the judges, I appreciate the Judiciary Committee reporting out these judges. In a Presidential election year, it is always very tough for judges. That is the way it has been for a long time, and that is why we have the Thurmond rule and other such rules. But I have indicated to the Republican leader that we are going to try to move these nominations along. We are trying to keep up with the average that has gone on in years past without a lot of political bickering.

We have the finest judicial system in the world. We need to make sure we keep it that way. One of the things we are looking to do—and, hopefully, we may even be able to do it on the supplemental appropriations bill; and one

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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